

## Firefly Ignites Thoughts of Climate Change

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I saw a firefly, one firefly, early one morning, before dawn, near the end of last month. It was the first, and only, firefly I've seen this summer. I used to see dozens, hundreds, of fireflies every night in summer when the weather was fair.

I have written about the scarcity of many birds, chimney swift, nighthawk, meadowlark and several others. I hadn't thought about fireflies or other insects. Except mosquitoes. Those aren't scarce. But mosquitoes aren't as numerous as they used to be. A few years ago I wore a net over my head when I went outside this time of year. There are still plenty of mosquitoes. They're annoying, they're irritating, but they aren't insufferable, without a protective net.



Fireflies at night near a pond

Thinking of fireflies, and mosquitoes, I thought of other insects that used to be numerous in summer where I live. I haven't seen a grasshopper this summer, or a cricket or a June bug. I haven't seen, or been bothered, by many flies. I haven't seen many ants this summer and most of the ants I have seen have been in our kitchen.

I haven't seen a butterfly this summer. The monarch butterfly is so scarce that it's designated an endangered species. I haven't seen a monarch but I haven't seen any other butterfly this summer either. Nor have I seen a moth this summer, not one.

Warm summer evenings I used to sit outside occasionally and watch moths and bats circling around the night light on a pole by our barn.

I haven't seen a dragonfly or a damselfly this summer. I don't remember when I last saw dragonflies and damselflies but we have a marsh on our property and I used to see both over and around the marsh every day that the weather was fair during the summer.

I haven't seen a bat this summer either, nor do I remember seeing one last summer. I haven't seen a snake this summer. I used to see garter snakes in the yard regularly, and turtles and

The long-term trend of ongoing heat the planet continues to see is primarily because of the emission of greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels, he said. Even if **2020** ends up not being the warmest year, NOAA said there's a 99.9% chance **that 2020** will end among the five warmest years on record. Apr 16, 2020

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frogs and toads, wanderers from the marsh. I have seen a few turtles this summer, little ones, none of them as big as my hand, cute, the neighbor lady called one she found in our driveway

when she was coming to visit. She stopped her car, picked the little turtle up, brought to my door and showed me.

All life is changing. It has always been changing. But it seems to have changed more than it used to. The weather particularly is changing, not just day to day, week to week, season to season.

Last winter was one of the mildest on record, around the world. I grew up in Iowa, lived in New York and now in Indiana and last winter there was the least snow I have ever seen in winter, excluding the time I was in the Navy stationed on a ship with home port Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

In winter in Iowa and in New York and in Indiana when I moved to the state snow covered the ground from some time near Thanksgiving until late in the spring. There were many days when the temperature didn't get above freezing. There were times when the weather didn't get above zero. There were times in Iowa, when I was young, when the temperature didn't get above ten degrees below zero. Last winter I don't think the temperature ever got down to zero. The change in the weather has been named. It's called climate change or global warming.

I was an early believer in global warming, not just because of the warmer winter weather but because, at first, of the decline in the number of many species of birds. I didn't think about insects or bats or turtles or frogs and toads and snakes. Now I do and even a single insect, a firefly, is a reminder.



Firefly - daytime